

## AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Monday, 28th September, 2020  
Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

<b>Present:</b>	Councillor Paul Waring (Chair)		
<b>Councillors:</b>	Kenneth Owen Sylvia Dymond	Sarah Pickup Mike Stubbs	Gillian Burnett Barry Panter
<b>Officers:</b>	Jan Willis  Daniel Dickinson  Sarah Wilkes Clare Potts Denise French	Interim Executive Director - Resources and Support Services and Section 151 Officer Head of Legal & Governance /Monitoring Officer Head of Finance Chief Internal Auditor Democratic Services Team Leader	
<b>Also in attendance:</b>	Councillor Stephen Sweeney, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency		

### 21. **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Phil Butters.

### 22. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

### 23. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 27<sup>th</sup> July be approved as a correct record subject to one amendment to delete resolution 19 (b) relating to the future Work Plan as this had already been dealt with at the meeting.

### 24. **INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20**

The Chief Internal Auditor, Clare Potts of Stoke on Trent City Council, introduced the Internal Audit Annual Report 2019-20. The overall summary showed the Council had an adequate, effective and well controlled framework of internal control. There had been 58 recommendations made during the Audit period of which 65.5% had been implemented.

Clare Potts summarised the findings and explained that the Audit Plan had identified 33 audits to be undertaken in 2019-20 of which 15 reports had been completed and issued. There were only 2 Audits which gave a negative opinion of 'less than adequately controlled'. The detail of the 58 recommendations was presented and the

current status showed that 38 recommendations had been implemented and revised target dates agreed for the remaining 20 recommendations.

Members asked what happened about the identified audits that had not yet been carried out. Clare Potts explained that they were reprogrammed for the current year and more detail would be given in her next item 'Internal Audit Update Quarter 1'.

**Resolved:** That the report be noted.

**25. INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE QUARTER 1**

The Committee considered the Internal Audit Update Quarter 1 report presented by Clare Potts, Chief Internal Auditor. The report stated that due to Covid-19 it had not been possible for any internal audit reviews to be undertaken during this Quarter. However, the internal audit team had been available to provide advice if required and some preparatory work had been undertaken for work to commence in Quarter 2.

The report explained that a review had been undertaken of the Annual Plan and Executive Management Team (EMT) had looked at deferred audits and made proposals as outlined in the report. Clare explained that in relation to the audit of GDPR a post holder had now been appointed and time would be allowed for this to embed and the topic risk assessed for inclusion in 2021-22.

Members queried the proposal that the audit of J2 was 'no longer required'. It was suggested that a Member review of issues relating to J2 was needed based on loss of both income and goodwill. The Executive Director for Resources and Support Services explained that this was understood; the audit focus would have been looking at internal controls and financial sustainability rather than issues of the building itself and the developer. She would arrange for this to be discussed at EMT and a report prepared for an appropriate Member Committee.

Members asked if Brexit was in the list of deferred audits and Clare explained that it was on the Audit Plan for Quarter 3. The Executive Director also advised that the Officer Group that had previously met to discuss preparations for a 'no deal' Brexit had been reconstituted and an update could be made to the next meeting.

**Resolved:** That

- (a) The Internal Audit Update Quarter 1 be noted; and
- (b) The Quarter 2 Risk Report update submitted to the next meeting include reference to preparations for Brexit.

**26. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL LETTER 2019/20**

The Committee considered the Annual Review Letter 2019-20 of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. The Letter provided a summary of the complaints against the Council. The Head of Legal and Governance Services said there had been 10 complaints during the year compared to 20 the previous year. The Ombudsman had investigated 4 of the complaints, 4 were referred to the Council for consideration and 2 were closed after initial enquiries. Of the 4 complaints investigated by the Ombudsman one was not upheld and 3 were; the report outlined how each complaint was due to circumstances specific to each case rather than suggesting a flaw in policy or process. The report also showed the number of

complaints made using the Council's own Complaints procedures. Members asked the Head of Legal and Governance to bring forward any issues he felt should be brought to the Committee's attention at an early point.

**Resolved:** that the Ombudsman's Annual Letter be received.

27. **COVID-19 UPDATE**

The Committee considered the update report on Covid-19 as submitted to Cabinet on 9<sup>th</sup> September – 'Back on Track – Coronavirus Pandemic Recovery Plan Update'.

**Resolved:** That the report be received.

28. **COMMITTEE WORK PLAN**

The Committee considered the Work Plan 2020/21.

**Resolved:** that the Work Plan be received.

29. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Business.

**Chair**

Meeting concluded at 7.40 pm